DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 246 588 EC 162 781

AUTHOR Marino, Roxanne P.
TITLE Secondary Public School Principals' Self-Ratings of Their Competency to Administer Special Education Programs.
PUB DATE May 84
NOTE 60p.; Master's Thesis, Slippery Rock University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Master Theses (042) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Administrator Characteristics; Administrator Role; *Competence; *Disabilities; Inservice Education; *Principals; Secondary Education; *Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Special Education

ABSTRACT

Twenty-seven public school secondary principals were surveyed regarding their self-ratings in competencies needed for administering special education programs. The questionnaire consisted of 11 competency statements and questions to reveal demographic profiles. Analysis of data indicated that 83% of Ss rated their performance "superior" to "good" in the areas of scheduling annual reviews for special education students and providing supportive services to meet special education teacher requests for assistance with exceptional student programs. The majority of respondents rated their performance as "good" in all competency areas, while they rated as "fair" their competence in inservice workshop development and participation. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED246588

SECONDARY PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR COMPETENCY TO ADMINISTER SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A THESIS

by

ROXANNE P. MARINO

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF EDUCATION

MAY, 1984

EC164281

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Roxanne Marino
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The following thesis was this day accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Education Degree.

Chairperson, Thesis Committee

Monica Ondrusek
Member(s), Thesis Committee

Robert D Berner
Chairperson, _____Department

Robert D Berner
Graduate Coordinator, __ Department

Date

Dean of the Graduate School

Acknowledgements

I extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Richard Myers for his continued assistance and full-hearted encouragement throughout the preparation of this study. The many hours of personal attention given to this study during an extremely busy schedule will always be appreciated and never forgotten.

Special thanks are extended to Dr. Robert Berner and Ms. Monica Ondrusko for their belief in the worth of this study and their steadfast guidance and encouragement during the research process.

I would also like to extend thanks to Dr. Monte L. Betz for granting permission to use his competency model as a basis for my study.

A very special thanks is extended to Mr. Andy Stoughton of the Computer Center of Slippery Rock University for his help and patience in the process of data analysis.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my sister, Shirley, for taking from her personal time and busy schedule to type this study for me.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother for the constant love and encouragement given to me during my graduate program. Her faith, strength, and belief in my professional career will always be appreciated and remembered.

Short Abstract

Title: Secondary Public School Principals' Self-Ratings of Their Competency to Administer Special Education Programs.

Author: Roxanne P. Marino

Text: This study was designed to determine how secondary public school principals rate themselves on selected competencies needed for administering special education programs.

The population surveyed consisted of 39 secondary public school principals employed in school districts serviced by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV in Western Pennsylvania.

The research instrument was adapted with permission from the author. The research questionnaire consisted of a demographic component and 11 items which required a five-point rating scale. The initial mailing of the questionnaire and follow-up procedures yielded a total of 27 questionnaires (69.2%) which were used in the study.

The data collected indicated that principals holding doctorate degrees rated themselves "superior" to "good" in the areas of scheduling annual reviews and providing teacher assistance. Principals with formal coursework in special education rated themselves "superior" to "good" in the

areas of developing inservices for teachers and preparing for due process procedures.

University: Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Long Abstract

This survey was conducted to determine how secondary public school principals rated themselves on selected competencies to administer special education programs.

The population consisted of 39 secondary public school principals employed in school districts which are located within the geographical area serviced by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV in Western Pennsylvania.

The research instrument used in the study was a questionnaire which consisted of two sections. The first section of the questionnaire was adapted from another study. It consisted of 11 competency statements on which the principals were asked to rate their performance on a five-point scale in each competency area. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to reveal a demographic profile of each principal in regard to age, education, special education coursework, special education inservice workshop(s), administrative experience, school setting, administrative level, and administrative control.

Preliminary letters were sent to 39 secondary public school principals to secure participation in the study. From the initial mailing, five secondary public school principals chose not to participate in the study. The questionnaire, cover letter, and stamped, self addressed envelope were

mailed to the 34 secondary public school principals identified as the survey population. Follow-up telephone calls directly to the principals were utilized to secure six questionnaires which were not returned. A total of 27 questionnaires (69.2%) were returned and utilized in the study.

The data were collected, hand tabulated and statistically analyzed with the services of the Computer Center of Slippery Rock University. The data collected indicated that secondary public school principals who hold doctorate degrees rated their performance "superior" to "good" in two specific competency areas. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the principals rated their performance "superior" to "good" in the areas of scheduling annual reviews for special education students. Also, 83% rated their performance as "superior" to "good" in the area of providing supportive services to meet special education teacher requests for assistance with exceptional student programs. Of the principals who indicated completion of formal coursework in special education, 100% rated their competency performance as "good" in knowledge of and preparation for due process procedures.

The total mean score (2.495) of ratings of principals on selected competencies to administer special education programs indicated that the majority of principals rated

their performance as "good" in all competency areas. Principals rated their performance "superior" in the area of reassigning instructional staff to optimize conditions for learning. The competency area in which principals rated their performance in leading inservice workshops for special education teachers received the lowest rating in relationship to all other competencies. Principals viewed their competence as "fair" in regard to inservice workshop development and participation.

The data did not reveal any other significant differences in ratings for principals in regard to demographic settings and the remaining eight of the eleven competency statements.

Table of Contents

		Page
Signature page		ii
Acknowledgements		iii
Short Abstract		iv
Long Abstract		vi
Table of Contents		ix
List of Tables		xi
Chapter I:	Introduction	1
	Introduction to the Problem	1
	Statement of the Problem	3
	Research Questions	3
	Definition of Terms	5
Chapter II:	Literature Review	7
	Introduction	7
	Principal Role Responsibility	8
	Principal's Competencies	10
	Graduate Preparation and Certification	12
	Summary and Conclusions	15
Chapter III:	Investigative Procedures	17
	Method	17
	Population	17
	Instrument	17
	Procedures	18
	Limitations	20

Chapter IV:	Results and Discussion	21
	Summary	28
Chapter V:	Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations	32
	Conclusions	32
	Implications	33
	Recommendations	34
Chapter VI:	References	36
Appendix A:	Demographic Questionnaire	40
	The Principals Behavioral Competencies Self-Rating Scale . . .	41
Appendix B:	Preliminary Letter	43
	Cover Letter	44
Appendix C:	Letter to Solicit Permission from Betz	45
	Betz Approval Letter	46

List of Tables

Table		Page
1.	Frequency of Responses Across Demographic Categories	22
2.	Mean Self-Ratings of Principals on Competencies	23
3.	Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Hold Master Degrees or Doctorate Degrees for Scheduling Annuals Reviews	25
4.	Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Hold Master Degrees or Doctorate Degrees for Planning Teacher Assistance	25
5.	Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Have or Have Not Completed Formal Coursework in Special Education for Leading Inservice Sessions	27
6.	Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Have or Have Not Completed Formal Coursework in Special Education for Preparing Due Process Procedures	27

Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Burrello and Sage (1979) reported that educational researchers have given limited attention to the role and responsibilities of public school principals in the administration of special education programs at the secondary public school administrative level.

With the passage of PL 94-142, more emphasis has been directed at the identification and development of competencies for general school administrators (Betz, 1977; Davis, 1977; Klopf, 1979; Nevin, 1979; Raske, 1979; Walters, 1979). In order to have provided effective special education programs and support services to exceptional learners in the least restrictive environment, the school administrator needs specific competencies. "General educational administrators in particular need to know not only what comprise the minimum standards prescribed by this act for the handicapped but what their impact might be upon non-handicapped children as well" (Zettel, 1979, p. 2).

Bonds and Lindsay (1980) stated that if the school is to provide more adequate services for special needs students, the principal is the key to succes. "His leadership will determine the success of failure of such programs" (p. 4).

Yulk (1982) stated "Because principals are bombarded with changes and new programs originating at higher levels in the educational system, technical and conceptual skills are needed to understand these changes and evaluate their desirability for the local school" (p. 3). "It seems appropriate that all educational administrators become 'special' administrators through training in special education competencies" (Stile and Pettibone, 1980, p. 533).

"To assure that these general school administrators acquire a basic understanding of the various special education programs provided for handicapped pupils, state legislatures should mandate that at least one course in special education be taken by all general school administrators" (Raske, 1979, p. 646). In order for administrators to organize competencies for the effective education of handicapped learners, universities should include special education components in programs of educational administration (Colella, 1979).

In Pennsylvania, it has been the prerogative of each college or university graduate program to incorporate or not incorporate special education components into graduate preparation programs in general educational administration. According to Dr. Herron, Advisor, Bureau of Certification, Pennsylvania Department of Education, individual school programs' course requirements are reviewed to determine a

candidate's eligibility for principal certification (L. Herron, personal communication, February 6, 1984).

A concern of this reseracher was to determine if there is a need to provide secondary school principals with educational experiences through inservice workshops or coursework in order to develop competencies for the administration of special education programs at the district building level.

Statement of the Problem

How did secondary public school principals rate themselves on selected competencies for administering special education programs.

Research Questions

A number of research questions were derived from the statement of the problem. These were:

1. What are the total mean self-ratings of principals on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?
2. Do the mean self-ratings of principals (age 40 or under) differ from the mean self-ratings of principals (age 40 and over) on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?
3. Do the mean self-ratings of beginning school principals differ from the mean self-ratings of

experienced principals on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?

4. Do the mean self-ratings of principals who hold doctoral degrees differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who have master degrees on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?
5. How do the mean self-ratings of principals who have completed courses in special education differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who have not completed any courses in special education on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?
6. How do the mean self-ratings of principals who have attended inservice workshops in special education differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who have not attended inservice workshops in special education on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?
7. Do the mean self-ratings on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale" for those principals who administer special education programs in their school differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who do not administer special education programs in their school?

8. How do the mean self-ratings of principals in middle, intermediate high, junior high, junior-senior high, and senior high schools differ on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"?

Definition of Terms

The following are explanations of terms used in this survey:

1. Administer: the ability to plan, organize, direct, coordinate and evaluate special education programs within a secondary public school setting.
2. Principal: a principal is a school district employee who holds certification as a principal and who is designated as "principal" in the employee contract of the school district.
3. "The Prircipals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale": a description of tasks that are considered essential for successful administration of special education programs: adapted with permission from Monte L. Betz, (1977).
4. Special Education: a basic education program adjusted to meet the educational needs of exceptional persons.
5. Self-Ratings: the ability to determine or judge one's quality of performance on a given task.
6. Beginning Principal: 1 to 5 years employment experience on a temporary Principal I Certificate.

7. Experienced Principal: 6 or more years of employment experience, permanent Principal II Certificate.
8. Formal Education: refers to completion of education in reference to credits and/or degree obtained: Ph.D., Ed.D., M.A., M. Ed.
9. Demographic Characteristics of Principals: refers to age, years of experience as an administrator, and years of formal education.
10. Training: any course and/or inservice workshop(s) related to special education.
11. Secondary Public School Administrative Setting: refers to type of school (middle, junior high, intermediate high, junior/senior high, senior high) school with special education program/school without special education program.

Literature Review

Introduction

"The key position in the school organization is occupied by the school principal" (McCleary and Thomas, 1979, p. 5). The principal brings to the school a unique background of training, experience, professional beliefs, and attitudes which condition his approach to what and how he attempts to influence. Yulk (1982) has stated important general education functions performed by principals. These were:

1. develop goals, policies and directions,
2. organize the school and design programs to accomplish the goals,
3. procure, manage, and allocate resources,
4. monitor progress, solve problems and maintain order,
5. create a climate for personal and professional growth and development,
6. represent the school to the district office and the outside community. (p. 4)

Results of several studies (Newman, 1970; Betz, 1977; Davis, 1977; Klopf, 1979; Nevin, 1979; Raske, 1979; Walters, 1979) suggested that these global competencies were not far removed from the competencies needed by principals to administer special education programs.

The purpose of this review of literature was to review the administrative role responsibilities of principals in regard to the implementation of PL 94-142, to review studies

relevant to competency development in special education for general administrators, and to determine the need for inclusion of special education components in graduate preparation programs and principal certification.

Principal Role Responsibility

Marro and Kohl (1972) conducted the first national study of local administrator of special education programs in public schools of the United States. Their study revealed that staff selection, teacher evaluation and curriculum development were major areas of administrative concern in special education programs. Amos and Moody (1977) concluded from a study of Mississippi school principals and teachers that the practice of encouraging the faculty to work as a team would produce the most extensive degree of implementation of mainstreaming programs for exceptional children.

Raske (1979) stated, "General school administrators responsible for special education programs in local school districts perform one of the most overlooked roles in special education" (p. 645). Since the implementation of PL 94-142, the administrative role responsibilities of the school principal have come into clear focus. In order to administer the needs of exceptional students in the least restrictive environment, educational administrators need to distinguish exactly who should or who should not be admitted

to special education programs (Zettel, 979). He stated that "General educational administrators become well versed in due (process) procedures not only as they relate to handicapped but to non-handicapped children as well" (p. 5). Educational administrators need to understand or have knowledge of the requirements mandated by PL 94-142 in regard to identification, testing, placement and evaluation of handicapped children.

Since the school principal functions as a manager and administrator of special education programs at the building level, "It is possible that PL 94-142 will force many administrators to assume a role which many have largely forgotten--that of being the instructional leader or master teacher of the local education setting" (Zettel, 1979, p. 5). Birch (1980) supports this hypothesis. He further stated that "The principal's main role in the mainstream instruction context is one of being alert to individual pupil needs and to appropriate application of special education instructional materials and methods" (p. 3).

In a paper written to support the need for inservice workshops in the area of mainstreaming in Western Pennsylvania, Birch (1980) cited five important areas of concern relevant to administrative role responsibilities of principals in the least restrictive environment. In order to present a holistic review of these responsibilities, he stated:

> The role of the principal is much more than handing out rules, regulations, procedures and instructions. Rather, it calls for the principal to consciously choose a leadership style that is of proven effectiveness and that is also in harmony with local school and community life styles. It means con-joint planning for desired changes, regular assessment of progress toward mutually determined goals, and enough flexibility to alter procedures or to design new ones when needed. It includes sufficient assertiveness on the principal's part to prevent or correct situations in which systemwide regulations or procedures might limit or stymie constructive actions at the building level. (p. 3)

Since public education systems have been made responsible for the accountability of special education programs, it follows that administrative personnel should develop an understanding of their job functions relative to the implementation of PL 94-142, and to the delivery of services to exceptional students.

Principal's Competencies

As early as 1970, Newman stated that "Exploring the functional tasks in special education administration is important in identifying procedures involved in the operation of programs for exceptional children" (p. 521). Newman's study presented several broad, yet major findings germane to competency development for general administrators in seven types of administrative activities.

Nevin (1979) explored competency development of general administrators who manage special education programs in Vermont. She concluded that competency development was

essential in the areas of "...advocacy and leadership functions as well as technical knowledge related to the handicapped child's educational program" (p. 364).

A list of specific competencies and responsibilities relative to the administration of special education programs for the handicapped at the building level was developed and validated by Betz (1977). The Betz Scale, which consisted of eleven competencies and twenty-four illustrative indicators, was distributed to forty-five elementary school principals. Burrello and Sage (1979) in discussing Betz's study, rendered these conclusions:

1. The principal has a definite role to play in the administration of special education regarding matters involving instructional staff.
2. Principals feel that individually delegated authority should be theirs in matters of student discipline, school schedule, coordination of support services, teacher assignment, and reemployment of staff at the local building level.
3. The role of the principal in due process hearings is ambiguous and unclear to both principals and directors of special education. (p. 223)

Davis (1977) identified ten "promising practices" in mainstreaming for secondary school principals. Five of these were identified as:

1. The principal provides leadership in planning for mainstreaming within his school.
2. The principal informs all the school faculty members of the process of mainstreaming as it is to be implemented in his particular building.
3. The principal must know and understand state and federal law and regulations.
4. It is important for the principal to demonstrate the application of individualization as well as to endorse it philosophically.

5. A final promising practice, which is also a requirement of the law, is the establishment by the principal of the priority of parent involvement and the attitude that will form the basis of school-parent interactions. (p. 8-14)

Other research studies (Walters, 1977; Klopf, 1979; Birch, 1980) listed similar competencies development relative to PL 94-142 and the administration of special education programs by school principals. Competencies in the areas of knowledge, attitudes, values and performance skills were identified as essential for effective management of special education programs at the building level.

Graduate Preparation and Certification

Wisland and Vaughan (1964) identified problems and problem areas experienced by directors and supervisors of special education in order to provide evidence to support the development of training programs for individuals planning to enter the field. This study appeared to be of value in forming basic guides for preparation programs in the area of special education administration and supervision.

The need for developing special education competencies in graduate programs of general educational administration was addressed in a study conducted by Stile and Pettibone (1980). The results of their study supported the hypothesis that if exceptional children are to be served well in regular and special classrooms, teachers, principals, and other

administrative personnel must receive specialized training in areas such as instructional programs for exceptional children and special education administrative concerns.

Walters (1979) surveyed school administrators in order to assess the implications for future program planning for the Department of Educational Administration, Temple University. Although identified competencies in the areas of curriculum/instruction, funds/facilities, school-community relations, pupil personnel services and professional/support personnel areas were stated by principals as primarily being acquired on the job, principals also stated that their academic programs had been of some assistance in helping to acquire these competencies.

Reehill (1982) surveyed public school principals employed in Bronx County, New York to determine and compare their knowledge and attitudes with regard to the placement of handicapped children in the most appropriate least restrictive environment. This study indicated that Bronx principals would benefit from preservice or inservice training in appropriate placements of handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. It also cited the following recommendations:

1. It is suggested that inservice training programs focusing on appropriate placement of handicapped children in the least restrictive environment should be developed by elementary school and middle school principals.
2. The State Education Department should consider mandating for School Administrator certification evidence of training for administrators and

supervisors concerning proper placement of handicapped children.

3. Although this study included only Bronx principals, it is reasonable to expect principals nationwide are experiencing similar problems. (p. 7-8)

Stile and Pettibone (1980) reported "Only 12 (24%) states require special education coursework for general administrative certification" (p. 531). They suggested that there is a lack of communication between state education agencies and institutions of higher education in regard to competency development and certification in special education for general administrators.

Currently, the state of Pennsylvania does not mandate either competency development or certification in special education for graduate student candidates seeking certification as public school principals. There seems to be a vague suggestion that competencies in special education should be developed by school principals (L. Herron, personal communication, February 6, 1984). According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education/Bureau of Certification, it is the prerogative of each college or university which offers graduate programs in educational administration to incorporate special education components into graduate programs. If these programs meet the general course requirements mandated by the state for principal certification (regardless of inclusion or exclusion of special education) qualified candidates will be awarded principal

certification (L. Herron, personal communication, February 6, 1984).

In addition, the Executive Academy of the Department of Education in Pennsylvania has not offered any inservice workshops in the area of special education, mainstreaming or least restrictive environment for school administrators for the past three years (M. Gray, personal communication, February 6, 1984).

In regard to administrative responsibility and special education, Colella (1979) stated:

> The primary burden for developing this leadership will fall on universities working in concert with the public schools. Training programs will have to be selective; emphasizing skill development in long range planning, policy development, supervision of staff, management of priorities, fiscal problem resolution, grantsmanship, negotiations, legal process knowledge, program implementation, report drafting and most importantly, interpersonal/ communications skills. (p. 4)

Summary and Conclusions

It seems apparent that PL 94-142 has invoked the need for a closer look at the role of the school principal in regard to the administration of special education programs at the building level. Legislative mandates of PL 94-142 have made principals accountable and responsible for the education of the handicapped student. These responsibilities have created the need for competency development for general educational administrators in the area of special education.

In addition, they have further created a need for more intensified graduate preparation programs and more stringent certification requirements for individuals seeking to become school principals. In light of the review of literature, it only seems appropriate that a study to investigate competencies of secondary public school principals in Western Pennsylvania be done to explore and determine their self-perceptions in regard to the administration of special education programs.

If the current "state of the art" administration of special education programs by principals at the building level in Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is reflective of this researcher's presentation and findings in the literature review, rapid and serious measures to re-educate current school principals and better prepare future school principals need to be considered in order to insure the future success of special education programs in regular education settings.

Investigative Procedures

Method

A descriptive research method was utilized to survey the self-ratings of secondary public school principals on the Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale.

Population

Due to the representation of urban, suburban, and rural geographic populations in Western Pennsylvania, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV was selected by the researcher to provide the invited sample of secondary public school principals who would participate in this study. Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV encompasses twenty-seven school districts. There were thirty-nine secondary public school principals employed in these school districts.

Instrument

The research instrument used was a questionnaire (See Appendix A) which consisted of two sections. The first section was developed and adapted with permission from the author (Betz, 1977). It consisted of eleven competency statements which included a five-point rating scale: A - superior, B - good, C - fair, D - poor, E - not applicable.

This scale was designed to be used for self-rating of the eleven selected competencies.

The Demographic Questionnaire was designed to reveal a demographic profile of each principal as to age, formal education, participation in special education workshop(s), coursework in special education, administrative experience, administrative level, school setting, and administrative control.

The questionnaires were field-tested in two graduate special education courses by fifteen graduate students. The field test resulted in minor changes in the wording of two competency areas.

The questionnaires were also pilot tested with three secondary public school principals employed in three school districts in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit III geographical region. The results of the pilot test rendered no changes to the questionnaires.

Procedures

On February 16, 1984, a preliminary letter was sent to thirty-nine secondary public school principals,employed in school districts serviced by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, in Western Pennsylvania, in order to solicit participation in the study (See Appendix B). Of the thirty-nine principals, five (13%) chose not to participate. On March 2, 1984, questionnaires were mailed directly to the thirty-four

principals who had indicated a willingness to participate in the study. The questionnaires were sent to the principals at their employing school (See Appendix B). Participants were asked to return the questionnaires within one week of their receipt (March 12, 1984). As a result of this mailing, twenty-eight (82.3%) questionnaires were returned. Of these, one questionnaire was returned uncompleted. This principal stated that he felt unqualified to respond to the questionnaire due to the fact that the respondent was employed in a sabbatical temporary position.

A follow-up telephone call was made in order to secure questionnaires from six principals not returning the questionnaire. Of these six, four principals decided at that time, not to participate in the study. Reasons for non-participation were lack of time to complete the questionnaire and questionnaire content.

On March 23, 1984, twenty-eight (69.2%) questionnaires were returned. Of these, twenty-seven were utilized in the study.

A hand tabulation of the data from twenty-seven valid questionnaries was conducted. The data were then forwarded to the Slippery Rock University Computer Center where the data were analyzed employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Bent, 197). This analysis provided information relative to:

1. the frequency of response rates across demographic categories,
2. mean scores for each of the eleven principal competency statements,
3. Chi square cross tabulations of all demographic and competency items.

The .05 level was selected for determining significance.

Limitations

The utilization of a self-rating questionnaire to conduct the study is a recognized limitation. Although the researcher has used an objective questionnaire, there remains the problem of biased responses to the questionnaire. This is due to the fact that principals have been asked to self-rate their performance. The results of this study cannot control for honesty of response and the validty and reliability of self-perceptions.

Results and Discussion

The frequency of response rates of principals in regard to demographic categories was determined (See Table 1). Of the twenty-seven principals who participated in the study, the majority of the respondents (92.6%) are age 41 or over. Twenty-one (77.8%) of the respondents indicated that they hold either a Master of Education or Master of Arts degree. Six (22.2%) reported that they hold either an Educational Doctorate or Doctor of Philosophy degree. Four principals (14.8%) have formal coursework background in special education. A majority of principals (85.2%) indicated that they have no formal coursework background in special education. A great number (81.5%) of respondents reported that they have attended inservice workshops relative to special education. In the area of administrative experience, twenty-four principals (88.0%) checked five or more years experience. The majority of respondents (81.4%) were employed in junior high, senior high, intermediate or junior-senior high schools. All respondents indicated that the school in which they are employed as principal has some type of special education program. The majority (88.9%) of the programs were district operated; 11.1% were operated by both the school district and Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV.

Table 1

Frequency of Responses Across Demographic Categories

Demographic Category	Number of Respondents N = 27	Relative Frequency
Age		
40 or under	2	7.4%
41 or over	25	92.6%
Educational Training		
Master degree	21	77.8%
Doctorate degree	6	22.2%
Special Education Training		
Formal work	4	14.8%
No formal work	23	85.2%
Inservice Workshop(s)		
Attendance	22	81.5%
Non-attendance	5	18.5%
Administrative Experience		
1 - 5 years	3	11.1%
5 or more years	24	88.9%
Administrative Level		
Junior-Senior High	22	81.4%
Middle School	5	18.5%
Administrative Control		
District operated	24	88.9%
District and I.U. operated	3	11.1%

Table 2

Mean Self-Ratings of Principals on Competencies

Competency	$\bar{X}$[a]	SD	Rank
Reassigns instructional staff (3)[b]	1.85	1.26	1
Arranges for time and space (8)	2.03	.89	2
Schedules annual reviews (2)	2.18	1.24	3
Selects personnel (1)	2.25	.25	4
Plans for teacher assistance (4)	2.29	.91	5
Prepares for due process (7)	2.51	1.34	6
Reviews supportive services (9)	2.55	.69	7
Coordinates non-academics (11)	2.74	1.43	8
Develops instructional units (6)	2.77	1.31	9
Analyzes student performance (10)	2.88	.93	10
Leads inservice sessions (5)	3.33	1.27	11

[a] The mean rating of 1.00 was used to determine superior performance. The mean rating of 4.00 was used to determine poor performance.

[b] Numbers following each competency represent the serial position of the competency on the questionnaire.

The total mean self-rating (2.495) of principals was determined for all competency statements. The mean self-ratings for each specific competency were ranked in order of

performance ability (See Table 2). None of the principals rate their performance as poor. Principals indicated that they are most competent in the area of assigning or reassigning instructional staff to optimize conditions for learning (Competency 3). Principals rate their performance as superior to good for this competency. Principals also rated their performance in regard to leading inservice training sessions for teachers as fair. This area (Competency 5) received the lowest rating from principals.

Significant differences in mean ratings of principals existed in regard to the type of degree held (masters or doctorate in two competency areas (See Table 3 and Table 4). In regard to relating needs of students to school systems goals and legal requirements (Competency 2), 61.9% of principals holding masters degrees rated their performance as superior to good. Of the principals who reported that they hold doctorate degrees, 83.3% rated their performance as superior to good on Competency 2. Of the twenty-seven principals surveyed, six principals (16.7%) who indicated that they hold doctorate degrees, rated their performance as fair to poor; twenty-one principals (28.6%) with masters degrees rated their performance as fair to poor. The Chi Square was $X^2 = 9.642$ for principals with different educational degrees on Competency 2 (df - 4, p. = .0469).

Table 4 indicates the mean self-ratings of principals holding a masters degree or a doctorate degree in regard to

defining goals and objectives that are unique to the school unit (Competency 4).

Table 3

Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Hold Master Degrees or Doctorate Degrees for Scheduling Annual Reviews.

Type of Degree	N	Superior to Good N	%	Fair to Poor N	%
M.Ed. - M.A.	21	13	61.9%	6	28.6%
Ed.D. - Ph.D.	6	5	83.3%	1	16.7%

Note. Figures do not add to 100% due to respondents who rated not applicable on this competency.

Table 4

Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Hold Master Degrees or Doctorate Degrees for Planning Teacher Assistance.

Type of Degree	N	Superior to Good N	%	Fair to Poor N	%
M.Ed. - M.A.	21	13	61.9%	7	33.3%
Ed.D. - Ph.D.	6	5	83.3%	1	16.7%

Note. Figures do not add to 100% due to respondents who rated not applicable on this competency.

The majority of principals who hold doctorate degrees (83.3%) rated their performance as being superior to good. Of the principals who indicated that they possess a masters degree, 61.9% rated their performance as being superior to good. The Chi Square for principals on Competency 4 was (X^2 = 12.742, df = 4, p. = .0126).

The data also indicated significant differences in regard to the demographic category of formal coursework in special education (See Table 5 and Table 6). In the competency area of leading inservice training sessions for teachers (Competency 5), 75% of principals who have had formal coursework in special education rated their performance as superior to good. Of the principals without formal coursework in special education, 21.7% rated their performance on Competency 5 as superior to good. The majority of principals without formal coursework in special education (52.1%) rated their performance as fair to poor on Competency 5. The Chi Square for principals on Competency 5 was (X^2 = 13.793, df = 4, p. = .0080).

In regard to knowledge of and preparation for special education due process procedures, 100% of principals who have had formal coursework in special education rated their performance as superior to good. Of those principals who have not had formal coursework in special education, 34.8% rated their performance as fair to poor. The Chi Square for Competency 7 was (X^2 = 9.391, df = 4, p. = .0520).

Table 5

Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Have or Have Not Completed Formal Coursework in Special Education for Leading Inservice Sessions.

Coursework	N	Superior to Good		Fair to Poor	
		N	%	N	%
Completed	4	3	75.0%	1	25.0%
Non-completion	23	5	21.7%	12	52.1%

Note. Figures do not add to 100% due to respondents who rated not applicable on this competency.

Table 6

Mean Self-Ratings of Principals Who Have or Have Not Completed Formal Coursework in Special Education for Preparing Due Process Procedures.

Coursework	N	Superior to Good		Fair to Poor	
		N	%	N	%
Completed	4	4	100.0%	0	0.0%
Non-completion	23	12	52.1%	8	34.8%

Note. Figures do not add to 100% due to respondents who rated not applicable on this competency.

Summary

The following is a summarization of data results in regard to the study's eight research questions.

Question One: What are the total mean self-ratings of principals on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? The total mean self-ratings of principals was 2.495. Principals rated their performance as good in most competency areas. Principals rated their performance highest in the area of assigning or reassigning instructional staff (Competency 3); principals rated their performance as fair in the area of leading inservice sessions for teachers. This area (Competency 5) was rated the lowest by principals.

Question Two: Do the mean self-ratings of principals (age 40 or under) differ from the mean self-ratings of principals (age 40 and over) on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? There were no significant differences in ratings of principals in regard to age of the principal and competency areas.

Question Three: Do the mean self-ratings of beginning school principals differ from the mean self-ratings of experienced principals on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? In regard to administrative experience, the data did not reveal any significant differences for principals with 1 to 5 years or principals with 5 or more years experience and competency areas.

Question Four: Do the mean self-ratings of principals who hold doctoral degrees differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who have master degrees on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? Significant differences in regard to types of degrees held by principals were revealed through Chi Square cross tabulation of the demographic area and competency areas. Principals who indicated that they hold a doctorate degree (83.3%) rated their performance as superior to good in the competency areas of scheduling annual reviews (Competency 2) and planning teacher assistance (Competency 4). In regard to the same competency areas, of the principals who indicated that they hold a masters degree, 61.9% rated their performance as superior to good. The data did not reveal other significant differences in the remaining competency areas.

Question Five: How do the mean self-ratings of principals who have completed courses in special education differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who have not completed any courses in special education on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? Of the four respondents who indicated completion of formal coursework in special education, 75% rated their performance as superior to good in regard to leading inservice sessions (Competency 5); 100% of these respondents also rated their performance as superior to good in preparing for due process

procedures (Competency 7). Of the principals who indicated non-completion of formal coursework in special education, 21.7% rated their performance as superior to good in leading inservice sessions; 52.1% rated their performance as superior to good in preparing for due process procedures. The data did not reveal other significant differences in the remaining nine competency areas.

Question Six: How do the mean self-ratings of principals who have attended inservice workshops in special education differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who have not attended inservice workshops in special education on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? There were no significant differences in ratings of principals in regard to attendance or non-attendance of inservice workshop(s) and competency statements.

Question Seven: Do the mean self-ratings on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale" for those principals who administer special education programs in their school differ from the mean self-ratings of principals who do not administer pecial education programs in their school? All respondents (100%) indicated that the school in which they are employed operates a special education program. Since type of school settings for all respondents was identical, no comparative data analysis was able to be conducted to obtain differences in mean self-ratings.

Question Eight: How do the mean self-ratings of principals in middle, intermediate high, junior high, junior-senior high, and senior high schools differ on "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale"? In regard to administrative level, the data did not reveal any significant differences for principals employed in various types of secondary public school levels and competency areas.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Conclusions

The data suggest that the majority of secondary public school principals view their competency as good in regard to administering special education programs.

The data indicates that principals holding doctorate degrees view themselves as more competent than principals holding masters degrees. It appears from the data that with additional education training and preparation, one becomes more competent in his field. In addition, principals who have completed special education coursework were more comfortable about leading inservice workshops for teachers of special education students and in preparing for due process hearings for special education students than principals who have no formal coursework in special education.

The data (in Tables 5 and 6) reveals that only four secondary public school principals (14.8%) have pursued competency development in and knowledge of special education programs. It can be concluded that principals' perceptions of their competency to administer special education program does not necessarily reflect any type of formal preparation or formal knowledge in special education programs and

related services for exceptional students.

Implications

It was the concern of this researcher to determine if there is a need to provide secondary school principals with inservice workshops or coursework to develop competencies for administering special education programs at the building level.

Although the data reveals that secondary public school principals involved in this study rate their competence as "good" in the competency areas selected for inclusion in this study, ratings of their abilities are not based on a solid educational background. It is logical that principals who have acquired competencies from coursework in special education would rate themselves more competent to administer programs. However, principals' self-ratings reveal that 85.2% of them have not completed formal coursework in special education. Yet, the total mean rating (2.495) of principals on all competency areas reflects that principals rate themselves as superior or good in regard to managing special education programs at the district building level. Therefore, it may be concluded that principals base their judgements of their performance on "in-house" experience or "on-the-job" training.

Similar studies (Walters, 1979; Reehill, 1982) have

presented results similar to those of this study. Both authors concluded that principals receive a good portion of their knowledge of special education programs during daily interaction with special education students in the schools. However, both studies also concluded that principals need to become more involved with inservice training programs and need to develop competencies in special education programs through graduate preparation programs.

Recommendations

The findings of research studies by (Walters, 1979; Reehili, 1982) and the findings of this study point to the need to replicate this survey across the state of Pennsylvania to gather data relative to competency performance of all school principals. In addition, special education teachers employed in the same schools as the "managing" principals could be surveyed in regard to their self-perceptions of principals' competencies to administer special education programs at the district building level. This would generate a comparison of self-ratings of the administrator and teachers in regard to the management of special education programs.

Peer observations could also be conducted to gather data relevant to "on-the-job" performance of principals. This type of research method might generate more objective responses from principals.

If relevant data reflects a need for principals to develop special education competencies, the Pennsylvania Department of Education/Bureau of Certification could mandate special education components in all graduate preparation programs for general administrators. This would provide for better prepared, more effective "mainstreamed" principals and better served special education students.

References

Amos, N. G., & Moody, L. (1977). Comparisons among principals, regular classroom teachers, and special education teachers of their perceptions of the extent of implementation of administrative practices pertaining to mainstreaming mildly handicapped students. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED 168 241)

Betz, M. L. (1977). The develoment and validation of building principal competencies on administration of programs for handicapped. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Birch, J. W. (1980). The principal and mainstreaming. In The principals handbook for mainstreaming (Administrators training project No. 48-0012-00-000 SERRC). Gibsonia, PA: Western Pennsylvania Special Education Regional Resource Center.

Bonds, C. W. & Lindsey, J. R. (1980). The principal in special education: the teacher's perspectives. (Summary Paper). Statesboro, GA: Georgia Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 213 209)

Burrello, L. C. & Sage, D. D. (1979). Leadership and change in special education. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Colella, H. V. (1979). Issues in the administration of special education. Buffalo, NY: Council for Exceptional Children, New York State Federation of Chapters. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 215 474)

Davis, E. D. (1977). Promising practices in mainstreaming for the secondary school principal. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 161 189)

Klopf, G. J. (1979). The principal and staff development in the school (with a special focus on the role of the principal in mainstreaming). New York, NY: Bank Street College of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 168 730)

Marro, T. D. & Kohl, J. W. (1972). Normative study of the administrative position in special education. Exceptional Children, 39, 5-13.

McCleary, L. E. & Thomas C. D. (1979). The senior high school principalship: a summary report. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Nevin, A. (1979). Special education administration competencies required of the general education administrator. Exceptional Children, 45, 363-365.

Nie, N. H., Hull, C. H., Jenkins, J. G., Steinbrenner, K., & Bent, D. H. (1975). Statistical package for the social sciences (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Newman, K. S. (1970). Administrative tasks in special education. Exceptional Children, 36, 521-524.

Raske, D. E. (1979). The role of general school administrators responsible for special education programs. Exceptional Children, 45, 645-646.

Reehill, J. (1982). Knowledge and attitudes of Bronx County New York public school principals with regard to the placement of children in the least restrictive environment. (Paper). Houston, TX: Council for Exceptional Children, 60th Annual International Convention. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 219 903)

Stile, S. W. & Pettibone, T. J. (1980). Training and certification of administrators in special education. Exceptional Children, 46, 530-533.

Walters, D. L. (1979). Perceptions of administrative competencies: a survey of school principals and superintendents. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 172 361)

Wisland, M. V. & Vaughan, T. D. (1964). Administrative problems in special education. Exceptional Children, 31, 87-89.

Yulk, G. (1982). The effective principal: a research summary. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Zettel, J. (1979). The impact of P.L. 94-142 upon general educational administrators. Columbus, OH: University Council for Educational Administration. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 175 147)

Appendix A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following items relative to your personal experience and training and to your current assignment.

(1) Age

_____ a. 40 or under

_____ b. 41 or over

(2) Educational Training

_____ a. M.Ed., M.A.

_____ b. Ed.D., Ph.D.

(3) Special Education Training

_____ a. Formal coursework in special education

_____ b. Never completed any formal coursework in special education

(4) Inservice Workshop(s)

_____ a. Attended inservice workshop(s) in special education

_____ b. Never attended inservice workshop(s) in special education

(5) Administrative Experience

_____ a. 1 - 5 years as principal

_____ b. 5 or more years as principal

(6) Administrative Level

_____ a. Middle School

_____ b. Junior High School

_____ c. Senior High School

_____ d. Intermediate High School

_____ e. Junior/Senior High School

(7) Type of School Setting

_____ a. School with special education program

_____ b. School without special education program

(8) Administrative Control

_____ a. Special education program that is district operated

_____ b. Special education program that is I.U. operated

_____ c. Special education program operated by the district and I.U.

(9) Please check below if you would like a copy of the survey results sent to you.

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____

(Name of School)

THE PRINCIPALS' BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES SELF RATINGS SCALE

This scale is designed so that you can rate how well you believe you demonstrate competencies needed to administer special education programs. Please read each statement and circle the letter on the rating scale next to each competency, indicating how well you believe you demonstrated this competency during the past two school years. (A - superior, B - good, C - fair, D - poor, E - not applicable).

---

1. *The Principal assists in the selection of personnel for instructional responsibilities.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal interviewed three persons for a special education teaching position and made recommendations for hiring to the superintendent.

2. *The Principal relates needs of students to school system goals and legal requirements.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal prepared a schedule for all exceptional students coming up for annual review with the district psychologist.

3. *The Principal assigns or reassigns instructional staff to optimize conditions for learning.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal provided evidence of having matched individual teacher competencies with specific job requirements in the assignment of the special education teacher.

4. *The Principal defines goals and objectives that are unique to the school unit.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal met each semester with supportive services staff assigned to the building to offer alternative plans to meet teacher requests for assistance with special education programs.

5. *The Principal leads in-service training sessions for teachers.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal conducted or participated in a workshop for teachers on behavioral management of exceptional students.

6. *The Principal guides the development of instructional units to implement unique goals and objectives.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal appointed a special education teacher to chair a committee responsible for preparing guidelines for grading exceptional students who are enrolled in mainstreamed classes.

(Continued on page 2)

7. *The Principal explains school and school district instructional policies and procedures and reports instructional problems and achievements to the school constituency.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal is prepared to appear at a due process hearing, in compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations, to report on the appropriateness of the school's recommended special education placement of a specific student.

8. *The Principal inventories the changing needs for time and space for various instructional purposes.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal surveys special education faculty needs concerning time and space needed for the development of individual educational programs for exceptional students.

9. *The Principal collects, organizes, analyzes and interprets data concerning other-than-teaching influences on learning.* A B C D E

   Example: The principal reviews the quality and quantity of supportive services available from the district office or Intermediate Unit to exceptional students and teachers.

10. *The Principal collects, organizes, analyzes and interprets data concerning the performance of students.* A B C D E

    Example: The principal made a systematic study of exceptional student discipline problems related to contributing factors. The results were used to plan programs for behavior management.

11. *The Principal organizes and coordinates the non-instructional services to optimize the accomplishments of instructional goals.* A B C D E

    Example: The principal worked with the director of transportation to change the bus schedule so that exceptional students could participate in late afternoon activities.

Appendix B

February 16, 1984

Dear Principals:

I am writing to you in regard to a research study which I am currently conducting with the Department of Special Education of Slippery Rock University.

I am asking for your help and cooperation in order to complete a study on "Secondary Public School Principals' Self-Ratings of Their Competency to Administer Special Education Programs". This study will survey the self-ratings of all secondary public school principals currently employed in school districts serviced by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV.

You will soon receive copies of two brief survey instruments in the mail. I ask that you complete the instrument and return it to me within one week of its receipt. Participation in and results of this study will be completely anonymous.

If you do not wish to participate in this study, please return the bottom portion of this letter to me at Slippery Rock University.

Thank you for the time and consideration given to my study.

Sincerely,

Roxanne P. Marino
Graduate Student

Dr. Richard K. Myers
Professor, Special Education

I do not wish to participate in this project.

(Name) _____ (School) _____

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania 16057-9989

March 2, 1984

Dear Principal:

I am presently a graduate student at Slippery Rock University, pursuing a Master of Education degree and certification in school supervision. Several months ago, I began research in the area of administration of special education programs.

I am asking for your help and cooperation in order to complete a study on "Secondary Public School Principals' Self-Ratings of Their Competency to Administer Special Education Programs." Principals' Behavioral Competencies refers to a description of tasks considered essential for successful administration of special education programs. As a result of PL 94-142, school administrators have been given the added responsibility of administering special education programs. If the trend to return exceptional students to regular education settings continues, school principals will be increasingly called upon to administer educational services for these students.

I am enclosing two brief survey instruments and directions for these instruments which I hope you will complete and return to me no later than one week of their receipt. The first is a "Demographic Questionnaire;" the second is "The Principals' Behavioral Competencies Self-Ratings Scale."

Although I know that you are extremely busy with school concerns, I hope you will take a few minutes to complete the two survey instruments and return them to me. I have included addressed and postage paid envelopes for your convenience.

Thank you, once again, for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Roxanne P. Marino

Roxanne P. Marino
Graduate Student

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania of the State System of Higher Education

Appendix C

October 12, 1983

Dr. Monte L. Betz
8011 Landmark Circle
Tampa, Florida 33615

Dear Dr. Betz:

I am in the process of writing a research proposal at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. After reading about your dissertation pertaining to Principals' Behavior in the Administration of Programs for Handicapped Children in Leonard C. Burrello's book Leadership and Change in Special Education, I have decided to write to you in order that I may secure your permission to use your competency model as a method to measure the competency skills of principals who manage special education programs in regular school settings on a secondary level. This study would be conducted in an Intermediate Unit in Western Pennsylvania.

As a former teacher of high school EMR students in Seminole County, Florida, I was constantly aware of the dissatisfaction and low morale status of special education teachers in my building in relationship to poor management of our program by our regular education principal. After returning home to Pennsylvania to pursue my Master's degree, I became more so aware that this is a problem that many special education teachers face each day at work. I feel that as professionals who provide services to handicapped children, our mutual goal is the successful integration of exceptional children into the mainstream of education. I feel that we might never achieve this plateau if we are not able to get to the core of the problem and help principals develop their competency skills to manage special education programs.

I am very excited about this project and hope that I may have your full support in order that I may continue my research. Please feel free to contact me at my school address.

Thank you, for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Roxanne P. Marino
Graduate Student